

University of Dundee

Citizen Science Projects (MOOC) 1.6

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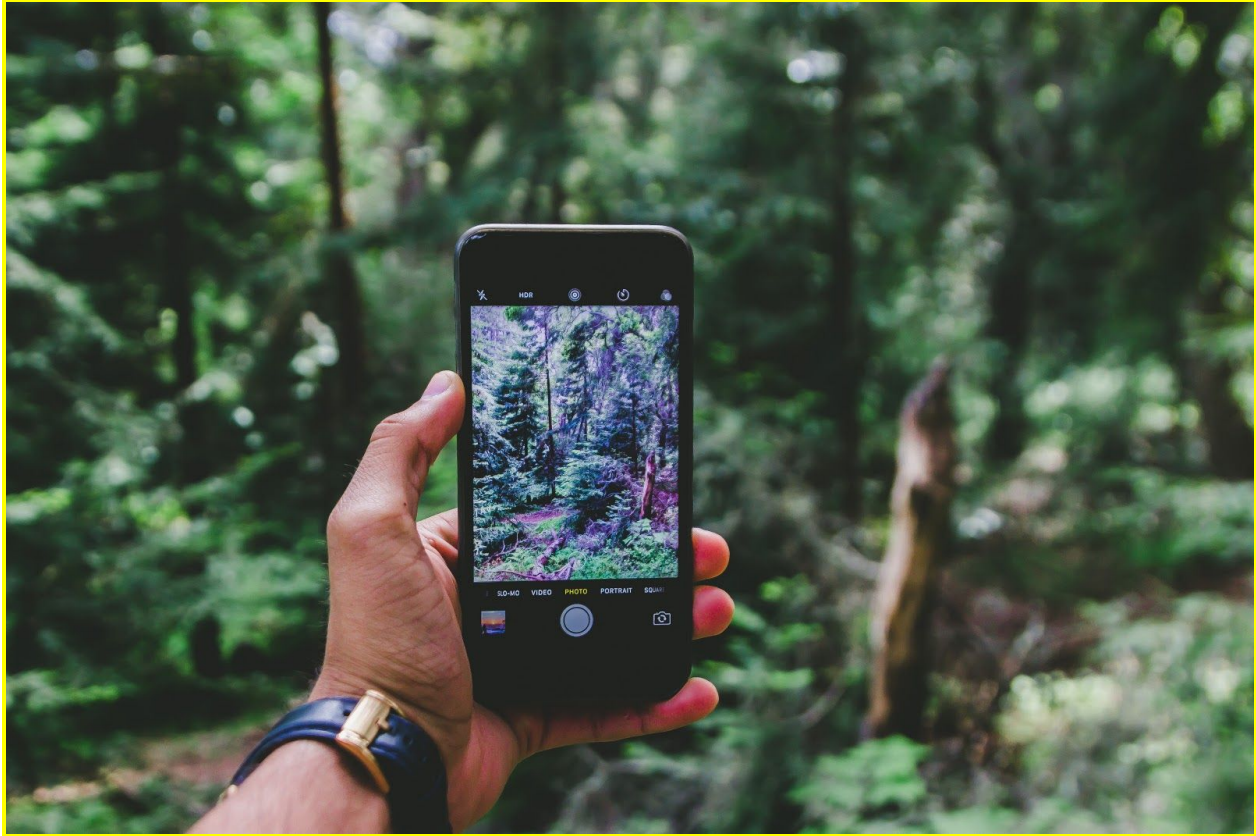
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What do you think makes a good citizen scientist? We'll start off with some of our ideas on this topic, and we want to hear more from you!

##What makes a good citizen scientist?

First, a good citizen scientist is interested in learning and discoveries. One of the ways you can get involved in citizen science is by collecting data, such as animal observations or water quality samples. Collecting a lot of these data would not be possible if scientists were working alone. But citizen science is not just about data collection. Analysing data, discovering new phenomena and generating new ideas are also activities that citizen scientists do. They contribute to the scientific process in positive ways, and so can you.

Second, a good citizen scientist has strong attention to detail. They follow guidelines agreed by the project team and engage with other citizen scientists (or the scientists running the project) when they have questions. In some projects, the guidelines are created with citizen scientists to make sure everyone's needs and goals are included.

Third, a good citizen scientist is curious. Being interested in a specific problem not only helps to motivate you and your fellow participants, but it also means you feel part of a project or the science taking place. Ownership is an important part of citizen science, and you should feel like your contributions are making a difference.

Do you think there are other characteristics that make a good citizen scientist? If so, please jot them down in the comments below to share with everyone.

##Getting involved in citizen science

If you want to take part in citizen science, here are some questions to consider, to help you to get out there and get involved:

What interests you?

There are excellent sites such as [Scistart](<https://scistart.co/>), [Zooniverse](<https://www.zooniverse.org/>), and [Space Hack](<https://spacehack.org/>) that can get you started right away. Or check your local newspaper or local environmental groups to see if they are running any citizen science projects near you. Many countries have a national portal for citizen science projects – such as [Schweiz Forrscht](<https://www.schweiz-forscht.ch/de/>) in Switzerland and [Burger Schaffen Wissen](<https://www.buergerschaffenwissen.de/projekte>) in Germany. If you know of a portal for your own country, please share it with others in the comments.

At home or in the field?

Think about whether you want to do citizen science from your living room, such as [cataloguing galaxies](<https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/zookeeper/galaxy-zoo/>) or whether you want to go outside and monitor some phenomenon in the field, such as [soil moisture](<https://growobservatory.org/>). This will influence your choice of projects. Both are equally valid ways to contribute.

Short or long-term?

Decide if you want to contribute occasionally or get involved in a project over the longer term. In some projects, thousands of volunteers submit one observation each. In others, one single volunteer might submit dozens or hundreds of observations.

In the next step, we will discuss the relationship between citizen science and citizens observatories. We will also present different types of citizen observatories and different kinds of activities, often referred to as campaigns or missions, that these citizen observatories run.